

# Ensligens landsförbund

YSI - Norway - Country case 1

## 1. Basic information

*Basics: Why was the 'landsförbund' formed, by whom, when etc.*

- *What does the organization do?*
- *What are the goals and how were they set?*
- *Have the goals been successfully reached? Why/why not?*
- *Is it well known and popular?*
- *Does the organization cooperate with the public sector, how?*

Ensliges Landsförbund was formed in 1957 by Alfhild Brevig, initially with the goal of improving single person's housing situation. According to Ensliges Landsförbund, the housing conditions in postwar Norway were very challenging, and people living alone was not eligible for several of the social-housing schemes existing at the time. This has improved over the past decades, and people living alone is now eligible to housing schemes in the same way as the general population. However, the organization argues that challenges remain and that their most important focus area still is housing. Further, they argue that other vulnerable groups are prioritized in housing schemes such as Start-up loan administered by The Norwegian state Housing Bank[1].

Ensliges Landsförbund is a voluntary organization with the goal of working towards improving the social and economic rights of people living alone. They argue that people living alone use a considerable larger share of their income on housing expenses such as loan and rent payments, but also on municipal taxes related to housing such as water, garbage disposal, real estate tax etc. Currently there is a fixed rate system not differentiating in accordance to how many people that lives in the household. In connection to their goal of improving living conditions for single-person households, the organization advocates for the reduction on fixed rates as well as other relevant topics concerning single person households.

Further the organization are working towards reversing a newly implemented mortgage regulation, requiring a minimum of 15 % in equity and a maximum limit of five times income when purchasing housing. The regulations are implemented in order to halt the substantial rise in housing prices seen in Oslo the past decade (Regjeringen.no 2016)

The organization works through contact with government authorities, such as politicians, The Norwegian state Housing Bank and to some degree writing newspaper commentaries. Further the organization are trying to influence politicians to commission a government white paper on people living alone.

In terms of whether their goals have been successfully reached or not, the organizations report that little has been achieved. The reason why, they argue, is that there is little political will or debate on the subject and that politicians and decision makers in general show little interest for the topic. A common argument that the organization is being met with, by politicians, is that the group of people living alone is large and disparate, often in a transient situation, and that policy targeting the group is difficult to implement or not regarded as necessary.

It is difficult to document to which degree the organization is popular and well-known in the Norwegian public. But it is seemingly safe to argue that the organization is not particularly well known, which is not a surprise given that the public debate on single person households are quite limited. Today the organization counts 1600 members.

The cooperation with public sector is limited, but some meetings have been carried out with members of parliament and in several cases with The Norwegian state Housing Bank. In addition, as voluntary organization Ensliges Landsforbund receives public funding.

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*[1] The Norwegian state Housing Bank is a public agency tasked with implementing housing policies such as providing homes for those who have difficulty entering the housing market. See <https://www.husbanken.no/english/norwegian-housing-policy/>*

## 2. Recommendations

*What recommendations does the organization give for advancing the situation of those living in single-person households?*

- *Especially interesting are the recommendations for the public sector*
- *Have their recommendations been adopted (in the public sector)? Why/why not?*

The organization is very concerned about housing, and the SSB report supports the organization's arguments that a larger share of the income for people living alone is tied up to housing. Further the report concludes that less than 60 percent of people living alone owned their own home (the share has been stable in the period 1987-2006) while the same rate for multi-person households was around 85 percent in the same period. In Norway housing policies are very favorable to self-ownership, for example through a tax deduction on mortgage interests while no tax deductions can be made for rent expenses.

The organization do not provide any examples of recommendations being adopted in the public sector. On the contrary they experience little political attention to their case.

### 3. Sources

Ensliges Landsforbund, [www.ensliges.no](http://www.ensliges.no). Retrieved 05.10.2017

Interview with consultant from Ensliges Landsforbund. 05.10.2017

Mørk Eilev et. al. SSB (2006) Aleneboendes levekår

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